

amendment in order be Marshall-Lee No. 4868; that Senator LEE be recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes and that, following his remarks, the Senate vote on the Marshall amendment; that upon disposition of the Marshall amendment, the bill shall be considered read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended, with 60 affirmative votes required for passage; that there be 6 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form prior to each vote, all without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce that an agreement has been reached between Democrats and Republicans that will allow the Senate to take up and pass the continuing resolution to fund the government through February 18. With this agreement, there will be no government shutdown, and I appreciate the work of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, including Leader McCONNELL, to reach this point. The good, bipartisan work that produced this agreement will give appropriators in both parties and in both Chambers time to reach a comprehensive agreement on appropriations by February 18 of next year.

I am glad that, in the end, cooler heads prevailed. The government will stay open. I thank the Members of this Chamber for walking us back from the brink of an avoidable, needless, and costly shutdown.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FURTHER EXTENDING GOVERNMENT FUNDING ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and proceed to the consideration of H.R. 6119, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6119) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

AMENDMENT NO. 4868

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, 45 million Americans, 45 million hard-working moms and dads, neighbors, and friends are being threatened right now with

losing their jobs. They are being threatened not due to cyclical economic conditions, not because jobs aren't available, not because of some war or other calamity; their jobs are being threatened by their own government—a government that has chosen to tell them if they don't comply with a Presidential medical orthodoxy, they will be fired.

This is unfortunate. This is most unfortunate. It is most unfortunate that this power has been exercised this way. The President doesn't have that power. Congress hasn't given the President that power. Congress doesn't have that power to begin with. This is not a power that belongs in the Federal Government to begin with.

As a result of that, 45 million Americans are being threatened with their jobs. They are being forced to choose between an unwanted medical procedure and losing their job.

Look, I want to be very clear. I have been vaccinated. My family has been vaccinated. I believe the development of the vaccine is something of a modern medical miracle. I am grateful for the vaccine. I think the vaccine is helping Americans be safe from the effects of COVID. It is not the government's job. It is not within government's authority to tell people that they must be vaccinated, and if they don't get vaccinated, they will get fired.

It is wrong. It is immoral. You don't tell someone that if they don't do exactly what you want them to do, that they are going to lose their job. The American people overwhelmingly agree.

In fact, according to a recent Axios poll, only 14 percent of all Americans agree with the President of the United States that if someone declines to get the jab, they should lose their job.

Now, this is a huge percentage of the workforce in many States—most States, in fact. Somewhere between a quarter and a third of all workers are now being faced with the possibility of losing their job because of these vaccine mandates. This, at a time when Americans are struggling just to put food on the table, in part, because we have a government that is spending too much money it doesn't have.

It is churning up money, printing it, in effect, in a way that results in rampant inflation; in a way that makes limited paychecks go less far, less capable of buying bread to put on the table. And amidst all of this government-manufactured crisis, government is making it worse; threatening to not just make that paycheck go even less far than it already does because of government but to take it away altogether. That is not kind; that is not the neighborly way in which we like to do things; it is not moral; and it is not constitutional.

Look, it is tragic that this many Americans have to have their jobs threatened as a result of a Presidential temper tantrum. There is nothing about it that is OK. Deep down, we all know that it is not OK.

I will tell you, there is another thing that is not OK. It is not OK that those who want to take away those jobs, those who are just fine with the President exercising this authority fought tooth and nail to prevent the U.S. Senate from taking the vote that we are preparing to take tonight, a simple vote—a simple vote that simply allows us to weigh in and decide whether or not we are going to fund that part of government, that feature of our government that is going to enforce the vaccine mandate.

Those in this Chamber who shamefully were refusing over and over again to let us even cast a vote on that simple measure threatened to shut down all of government because they didn't want to have us have a chance, as the people's elected lawmakers, to decide whether or not we should proceed with vaccine mandate enforcement. They would rather shut down the government and make everything worse than they would stand accountable for what they are doing.

Fortunately, this part of the story at least has a happy ending. We are going to be able to vote on that tonight. We are going to be able to vote on whether or not we fund vaccine mandate enforcement at the Federal level.

This is wonderful. This is fantastic. It should not have resulted in days and days of shutdown threats and days and days of deflection, accusing other people of wanting to shut down the government when all we wanted to do was have a vote, to give a chance to the hard-working mom or dad, soldier, sailor, airman, or marine struggling to put food on the table. That is all we wanted. And all they wanted to do is use it as an excuse to deflect onto others that which they are doing.

We can do better than this. We must do better than this. The American people deserve better than this. That is why I am so glad and grateful that we will be casting this vote tonight.

But know this: This issue is not going away. I hope with everything in me that when we cast this vote tonight, that a majority of us will do the right thing and that we will vote the way that we know we should vote; that we will stand with those people who may lose their jobs. Thirty-one percent of the workers in my State—and in other States, it is higher. Thirty-nine percent of the workers in West Virginia stand to lose their jobs, 37 percent of the workers in Alabama, 33 percent of the workers in Georgia. In State after State, you see hard-working moms and dads being threatened.

This isn't right. It is not even an authority that the President has. It is not authority that the Congress has. We shouldn't be doing this. Deep down, we all know that is right. We also know that some of these problems result from the fact that when we fund the government, we have made significant mistakes as a result of the fact we have allowed so many spending decisions to be concentrated in one vote on one bill,